DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 443 102 CS 014 058

AUTHOR Burlew, Whitney; Gordon, Tracy; Holst, Charla; Smith, Cathy; Ward, Judi; Wheeler, Karen

TITLE A Study of Reading Motivation Techniques with Primary Elementary School Students.

PUB DATE 2000-05-00

NOTE 67p.; M.A. Research Project, Saint Xavier University and SkyLight Professional Development. .

PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses (040)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Action Research; Primary Education; *Reading Attitudes; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Motivation; Reading Research; *Recreational Reading

ABSTRACT

This report describes strategies for increasing levels of interest in reading for enjoyment. The targeted population consisted of first, second, and third grade students in three elementary school districts. The schools were located in middle class and affluent suburban communities of a large city in the Midwest. The problem of lack of interest in reading for enjoyment was documented with student surveys, teacher observations, and reading inventories. Review of the research indicated that students' negative attitudes and poor self-esteem contributed to lack of motivation. Weak reading skills and inadequate practice also inhibited students' desire to read. These probable causes were also present at the targeted sites. A review of the solution techniques suggested by other researchers, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in instruction that modeled reading and promoted its value and enjoyment. The program provided time and materials for students to focus on reading and share with one another. Post intervention data indicated that the students' level of interest to read increased. More research is necessary to determine whether the interventions are effective for students in grades four and above. (Contains 43 references, and 6 tables and 6 figures of data. Appendixes contain a student reading survey, a teacher observation sheet, a home reading log, and the parent information letter.) (Author/RS)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 443 102

A STUDY OF READING MOTIVATION TECHNIQUES WITH PRIMARY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Whitney Burlew
Tracy Gordon
Charla Holst
Cathy Smith
Judi Ward
Karen Wheeler

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership.

Saint Xavier University and Skylight Professional Development
Field-Based Masters Program
Chicago, Illinois
May, 2000

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
W. Burlew
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CS 014 058

SIGNATURE PAGE

This project was approved by

Amy S. Hanson Ph.D
Advisor

Marguerite Vandcoyoc C.A.S., Nancy Thistry M.A.
Advisor

Beverly Gulley
Dean, School of Education

Abstract

This report describes strategies for increasing levels of interest in reading for enjoyment. The targeted population consisted of first, second, and third grade students in three elementary school districts. The schools were located in middle class and affluent suburban communities of a large city in the Midwest. The problem of lack of interest in reading for enjoyment was documented with student surveys, teacher observations, and reading inventories.

Review of the research indicated that students' negative attitudes and poor self-esteem contributed to lack of motivation. Weak reading skills and inadequate practice also inhibited students' desire to read. These probable causes were also present at the targeted sites.

A review of the solution techniques suggested by other researchers, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in instruction that modeled reading and promoted its value and enjoyment. The program provided time and materials for students to focus on reading and share with one another.

Post intervention data indicated that the students level of interest to read increased. More research is necessary to determine whether the interventions are effective for students in grades four and above.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 - PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT..... 1

General Statement of the Problem..... 1

Immediate Problem..... 1

The Surrounding Community..... 7

National Context of the Problem..... 10

CHAPTER 2 - PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION..... 12

Problem Evidence..... 12

Probable Causes..... 15

CHAPTER 3 - THE SOLUTION STRATEGY..... 22

Literature Review..... 22

Project Objectives and Processes..... 32

Project Action Plan..... 32

Methods of Assessment..... 33

CHAPTER 4 -PROJECT RESULTS..... 35

Historical Description of the Intervention..... 35

Presentation and Analysis of Results..... 40

Conclusions and Recommendations..... 46

REFERENCES..... 50

APPENDICES

A STUDENT READING SURVEY..... 54

B TEACHER OBSERVATION SHEET..... 56

C HOME READING LOG..... 58

D PARENT INFORMATION LETTER..... 60

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement and Context

The students of the targeted first, second, and third grade classes exhibit a lack of interest in reading for enjoyment. Evidence for the existence of this problem in the majority of the targeted groups includes: information gathered from the student surveys, teacher observation checklists, and anecdotal records.

Immediate Problem Context

There are three sites. They will be compared as well as described individually.

Comparison of Sites

Information regarding the targeted classrooms presented in this study are represented in tables. Table 1 presents racial/ethnic background and total enrollment of the students. Table 2 presents attendance, mobility, and chronic truancy. Table 3 presents average class size. Table 4 presents teacher/administrator characteristics.

The three school settings reflected in Table 1 suggest that as the sites are compared, overall, each has a very diverse racial and ethnic background. The total enrollment is very different among the sites. Site A has the largest amount of students and Site C has the least amount of students.

In Table 2, all sites greatly exceed the state average of attendance. The figures in this table compare favorably to the

state percentages. Site A has a large percentage of student mobility which contrasts the other sites.

Table 1

Racial/Ethnic Background and Total Enrollment

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/P. Islander	Native American	Total Enrollment
Site A	74.0%	2.5%	18.2%	8.9%	0.0%	730
Site B	65.1%	3.1%	26.7%	5.0%	0.0%	516
Site C	79.6%	0.7%	1.2%	18.5%	0.0%	416

Table 2

Attendance, Mobility, and Chronic Truancy

	Attendance	Student Mobility	Chronic Truancy	Number of Chronic Truants
Site A	95.4%	12.5%	0.0%	0
Site B	95.4%	7.2%	0.4%	2
Site C	96.3%	5.8%	0.0%	0
State	93.9%	18.2%	2.3%	43,167

The three school settings reflected in Table 3 suggest that Sites A, B, and C are at or below the state average for class size at first and third grade levels. At all three sites, the average class size for kindergarten is well below the state average.

In Tables 4 and 5, Site C has the highest average of teaching experience. Site A has a comparable amount of years of experience, whereas Site B is significantly lower than Sites A and C. The average years of teaching experience is an area where Site B is significantly different. Each school setting will be described individually.

Table 3

Average Class Size

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 3
Site A	19.4	22.7	23.1
Site B	18.5	22.5	23.0
Site C	18.7	18.0	23.0
State	22.1	22.8	23.2

Table 4

Teacher/Administrator Characteristics

	Average Teaching Experience	Teachers with Bachelor's Degree & Above	Teachers with Master's Degree Elementary
Site A	12.9 Yrs.	48.9%	51.1%
Site B	10.5 Yrs.	83.3%	16.7%
Site C	15.2 Yrs.	45.6%	54.4%

Table 5

Teacher/Administrator Characteristics

	Pupil Teacher Ratio	Pupil Certified Staff Ratio	Pupil Administrator Ratio
Site A	17.7:1	13.9:1	248.2:1
Site B	19.0:1	14.7:1	316.4:1
Site C	13.6:1	10.7:1	217.3:1

School Setting of Site A

The school consists of first and second grade students and is one of five public kindergarten through eighth grade elementary

schools in the community. The school district was designed to be a campus type of configuration rather than neighborhood schools. The first and second grade building has four main hallways which form the shape of an "H". All classrooms are on one floor with the gymnasium and multipurpose room in one wing. The students are grouped according to grade level in teams of five to six classrooms to create a "school within a school" type of environment. Due to such a large school population, students are kept on their same teams each year throughout their kindergarten through eighth grade education.

Parents of the school are very active in their child's education. Joining organized parent volunteer programs such as the Parent Teacher Organization, Parents and Literature Program (PAL), Picture Parent Program, and volunteering on committees and in the classroom are some of the ways parents get involved in their child's schooling.

Students at Site A spend 147 minutes daily in reading/language arts education. The district uses the Pegasus program for instruction. The library staff supports this whole language/literature based program by putting all support materials for each unit of study on carts for teacher checkout and all teachers receive a detailed bibliography listing each item on reserve for their use.

The school is a large sized elementary school consisting of 17 first grade classrooms and 16 second grade classrooms. The targeted classrooms are one first grade class and two second grade classes and the school library. The school houses 800 students and a staff of 1 principal, 1 assistant principal and 33 classroom teachers. The staff also includes learning disabilities resource

teachers, English as a second language teachers, speech pathologists, a social worker, a librarian, physical education teachers, music teachers, art teachers, and a nurse. The children have physical education three times a week, music two times a week, library once a week, and art once a week. In contrast, Site B is a kindergarten through fifth grade building.

School Setting of Site B

Site B is an elementary school which consists of grades kindergarten through fifth grade. It is one of three elementary schools in the district. Site B is a medium sized elementary school, with a population of 540 students. This neighborhood school is a one story building in the shape of a "T". It houses grades kindergarten through fourth internally. A second grade classroom houses the targeted group. There are also two portable classrooms west of the school building where fifth grade instruction occurs. Many students walk or are dropped off at this facility. There is a staff of 1 principal, 21 classroom teachers, 4 related arts teachers, 9 teacher assistants, 7 special education teachers, and 2 half-time nurses.

Students at Site B spend 135 minutes daily in reading/language arts education. The district uses the Pegasus program for instruction, as does Site A. This whole language/literature based program is supported by the library staff at Site B by putting all supplemental materials for each unit of study on carts for teacher checkout. Teachers receive a detailed bibliography listing each item on reserve.

Site B received the National Excellence in Education Award in 1993. The instructional program stresses a comprehensive basic-skills program with enrichment opportunities at each grade level.

The staff also stresses a positive self-image through such programs as "Skills Growing" and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE). In addition, various reading incentive programs, including a once a month Parent Reading Night and Super Outstanding Awesome Readers (SOAR), have been created to celebrate and support reading. Site B encourages parent involvement and has a very active and supportive parent organization. This site provides a wide range of communications between the home and school to ensure an effective partnership. Site C also values the involvement of parents.

School Setting of Site C

Site C is part of a small, wealthy, and academically strong district which contains one elementary school and one middle school. It serves students from kindergarten through grade five. The school is a one story building which forms the shape of a "U". A courtyard sits in the center of the building. There are two additional wings which house the music, orchestra, and kindergarten rooms. Recent additions to the school include a new Information Technology Center (ITC), six additional classrooms, and a stage at the end of a multipurpose room. In addition, there is a gymnasium, a science room, an art studio, and a computer room. Each grade level has three or four sections. The total enrollment is 416 students, of which 68 are third grade students. One of the third grade classrooms is the targeted group. There is a staff of 1 principal, 20 classroom teachers, 4 special education teachers, 3 special teachers, 1 librarian, 1 speech pathologist, 1 English as a second language teacher, and 1 nurse. The children have physical education five times a week, music two times a week, and art once a week. Library time is provided on a flexible

schedule. Site C parents and community p
education. Actively volunteering in the
community members form a valued resource
assist in classrooms, and participate in
teachers' clubs.

Site C designs their curriculum to m
whole child with a program that stresses
is equally concerned about students' soci
physical well-being. Students are given
participate in many extra-curricular acti
Great Books, computer club, student counc
reading club, science club, and DARE. Th
for these three sites are just as diverse

The Surrounding Comm

Each site is located in a different
30 mile radius of each other. Sites will
individually.

Community Setting of Site A

Site A is located approximately 35 m
metropolitan city in the Midwest. It is
rapidly growing district. The district
superintendent, one associate superintend
curriculum, one director of special servi
technology, five principals, and four ass
Currently there is a kindergarten buildin
housing all first and second grades, an
all third and fourth grades, a middle sch
six, and a junior high school for grades
the passing of a 1996 building referendum

munity place a high priority on
in the schools, parents and
esource as they share expertise,
pate in the parents' and

lum to meet the needs of the
tresses academic excellence but
ts' social, emotional, and
e given ample opportunities to
lar activities including Junior
nt council, enrichment programs,
ARE. The surrounding communities
diverse as the school settings.
ing Community
fferent community within a
tes will be described

ely 35 miles north of a large
It is one of five schools in a
strict is headed by one
erintendent, one director of
al services, one director of
four assistant principals.
building, a primary building
es, an intermediate building with
ddle school of grades five and
grades seven and eight. With
ferendum, parents expressed their

desire to keep children in one building for a longer period of time. Therefore, in the fall of 1999, the district will undergo a reconfiguration. Kindergarten students will remain in their present building, the current primary and intermediate schools both will house first through fourth grades, the middle school will become an option school for kindergarten through sixth grade, the fifth and sixth grades will move to the current junior high building, and the seventh and eighth grades will be housed in a new facility.

The current population of Site A's community is approximately 15,319. The mean family income is estimated at $48,873. The average home value is $140,500. Generally speaking, the racial ethnic groups for this site are mostly White with a large percentage of Hispanic. The community residents enjoy shopping at nearby malls, eating at restaurants, and attending movie theaters. Other leisure attractions include 315 acres of park district land available for baseball, soccer, and picnics, as well as tennis, bicycling on bike paths, and playing on numerous playgrounds. The park district features a zero depth pool along with sand volleyball courts, a gymnasium, a fitness center, preschool, summer day camps, and swimming lessons. There are also many recreational amenities near Site B.

Community Setting for Site B

The community for Site B is located directly adjacent to Site A, approximately 35 miles north of a large metropolitan city in the Midwest. It is not a wealthy district, primarily because it does not have a broad tax base. One superintendent, two principals, and one pupil service director lead this district. The district is comprised of four elementary schools with grades

kindergarten through fifth grades, and one junior high school, grades sixth through eighth. There are a total of approximately 2,300 students in this district. The community residents enjoy parks in every neighborhood, a new recreation center with health club, three lakes, and three golf courses. The current population of Site B's community is approximately 28,952. The mean family income is estimated at $68,401. The average home value is $165,956. The prominent racial ethnic groups for this community are White and Hispanic. This is in sharp contrast to the community setting for Site C.

Community Setting for Site C

Site C is the first registered school district in its designated county. It serves a community north of a large metropolitan city in the Midwest. This progressive community is known for its aesthetically pleasing atmosphere, with tree lined streets and expensive, well-maintained homes. It is a community committed to high quality public schools. The district is lead by one superintendent, two principals, and one director of special education. The district consists of two buildings, one kindergarten through fifth grade, the other sixth through eighth grade. The enrollment for the district is 600 students, who represent many different cultures and beliefs. The main racial ethnic groups for this community include White and Asian. The mean family income is $81,568. The average home value is $280,000. The community residents enjoy shopping at nearby specialty shops, eating at restaurants, utilizing the recreational opportunities of the lakefront, and accessing an extensive public library facility. The community park district offers abundant programs and facilities. All three sites experience the national

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

concern of reading motivation.

National Context of the Problem

"Motivation is an integral component of reading instruction" (Gambrell et al., 1996, p. 532). According to Arthur and Burch (1993), the rationale for teaching children to enjoy reading is a major problem facing teachers:

> In order for individuals to become better readers they must read. This is good advice, but it does not address the problems of students who WON'T read. Every day, teachers face both capable and poor readers who simply will not read because of their apathetic attitudes about reading. (p. 280)

The crisis of student motivation for reading is reflected in one simple fact. Students do not spend any significant portion of their free time reading. As cited by Gambrell (1996), in a study conducted by Veeman, teachers rank motivating students as one of their primary and overriding concerns.

Providing students with the ability to read and enjoy their literature experience is the job of the educational system. Therefore, to ensure this goal, reading must be a priority. According to Guthrie (1996), highly motivated readers generate their own literacy learning opportunities, and, in doing so, they begin to determine their own destiny as literacy learners. This is a dynamic opportunity to practice skills and strategies for reading. If students believe they are capable readers, they will outperform those who do not. Teachers can easily identify highly motivated readers in their classroom. "Highly motivated readers are self-determining and generate their own reading opportunities. They want to read and choose to read for a wide range of personal

reasons such as curiosity, involvement, social interchange, and emotional satisfaction" (Gambrell et al., 1996, p. 518).

"A more recent national survey of teachers also revealed that creating interest in reading was rated as the most important area for future research" (Gambrell et al., 1995, p. 143). Motivating students to read is paramount to success. Educators need to increase their understanding of how children acquire the motivation to develop into life-long readers. Evidence from theory and research supports the notion that high motivation to read is associated with positive self-concept (Ford, 1992; Henk & Melnick, 1995; Wigfield, 1994). Teachers have long recognized that motivation is an integral component of reading instruction. The results of many studies clearly indicate the need to increase understanding of how children acquire the motivation to develop into active, engaged readers. This is a problem that is evident at the three sites.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

The problem of a lack of interest in reading for enjoyment in the first, second, and third grade students was documented through a student survey, teacher observation checklists, reading inventories, and anecdotal records.

Student Survey

A survey (Appendix A) was given to the students in five targeted classrooms with respect to attitudes toward reading. It was administered to 24 first graders, 48 second graders and 38 third graders. The surveys were administered in the morning, during reading time. Copies were distributed to students and they were asked to write their name, date, and grade level in the space provided. The survey was read and explained, question by question, to the students. The students answered each question by choosing a response that reflected their feelings about reading. The four choices given were: strongly agree, unsure, disagree, strongly disagree. The choices were also represented by facial expressions. Additionally, students were to circle two of three illustrations that represented free choice activities. Each choice was described, with examples given to the students. The choices were: computer/video games or watching television, reading books, and playing with friends. There was a 98% response rate. Two percent of the targeted population was not

surveyed due to absence from school. The results are collapsed across sites and presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Student Reading Survey Results

	agree	unsure	disagree	strongly disagree
1. Do you like reading books?	59%	24.5%	7%	9.5%
3. Do you read at home for fun?	52%	24.5%	7.5%	16%
4. Do you like to receive books for a present?	51.8%	25.5%	12.3%	10.4%
6. Circle 2 things you do during your free time.	Computer, TV, video games 73.6%	reading 55.4%		playing with friends 71%

The results of the student attitude survey indicated that reading motivation was problematic for almost half of the children, as evidenced in questions one and three. When the children were asked if they liked receiving books as gifts, almost half responded negatively. Children chose other activities over reading 72.3% of the time when given choices for free time options. This shows that some of the students of the targeted first, second, and third grade classes exhibit a similar lack of interest in reading for enjoyment.

The results of this survey support the problem that difficulty with reading motivation exists. The teacher observation checklist was another tool used to document the problem.

Teacher Observation Checklist

The researchers looked for the following behaviors during a variety of reading opportunities: chooses books at an appropriate level, appears to enjoy reading, answers questions about the book, sustains reading for the designated amount of time, uses time in the library for reading, makes purposeful choices of books in the library, and chooses a reading related activity during free time. These behaviors were documented on a teacher observation checklist over the first few weeks of the study. A total of 110 students at the three sites were observed on a daily basis. After observing students in reading workshop, silent reading time, library, and free time in class, the teachers recognized definite repetitive patterns of negative reading behavior in some children. Of the children lacking motivation to read, almost half were unable to sustain independent reading for the suitable amount of time. The amount of time varied among grade levels of the designated classrooms. During the course of the research, the time allotted for silent reading ranged from 10-30 minutes. The observation checklist indicated that many students lack motivation to read. Similar behaviors were observed during library and free time in class. Additional information was also gathered from anecdotal records.

Anecdotal Records

Through the use of anecdotal records, the teachers have documentation of poor attitudes toward reading for enjoyment. At

all sites, children were observed talking during self-selected silent reading, wandering aimlessly in the library during book selection time, and being disruptive during reading workshop. The students' documented lack of participation is an indication of their limited desire to read for enjoyment.

Upon review of the student surveys, teacher observation checklists, and anecdotal records, the researchers have seen a pattern that indicates that a lack of reading motivation exists in some children at the three sites. It has been concluded that the behaviors illustrated at all sites can be attributed to several probable causes.

Probable Causes

Teachers and parents face the challenge of engaging children in reading for enjoyment. "For the majority of the children, reading from books occupied one percent of their free time or less" (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 77). There are many causes for the lack of recreational reading in children today. Review of research concludes that attitudes toward reading, poor self-esteem, lack of reading at home, lack of access to books, too many extra-curricular choices, and difficulty with reading are some of the causes that affect motivation.

Attitudes Toward Reading

Certain conditions make it more or less likely that students' attention, interests, and thoughts will lead to reading for enjoyment. When one researcher questioned her new pupils about reading, some of the responses were: "boring... can't sit still long... I'd rather watch TV... doesn't interest me..." (Treu, 1995, p. 29). Other learners balk at reading because they feel it will take too much time or effort (Fox, 1989). When students

at the three sites were surveyed, some of their responses reflected a similar attitude. Almost one quarter of the survey respondents indicated a negative reaction toward reading books. When children were observed in a variety of literary experiences, some students demonstrated a lack of interest. Beers (1996) also found this attitude to be a factor in unmotivated readers.

Peer pressure can affect youngsters' desire to read in their free time. This is especially true of older students. Beers (1996) gives an example of peer pressure affecting reading motivation: "Muhammad is a nonreader because he believes survival in his neighborhood hinges on how peers view him and whether he fits in" (p. 30). The act of reading, for this boy and for many other children, depends on the value his peer group places on it (Beers, 1996, p. 30). Further, if a learner sees value in reading, the student will be engaged in this activity. Students who perceive reading as valuable "will engage in reading..." (Gambrell, 1996, p. 518). Hence, many factors affect a student's attitude toward reading, including peer pressure, value, and time. Poor self esteem is another reason why children are not motivated to read.

Poor Self-Esteem

Given the chance, almost every child wants to learn to read. Given the chance, will every child choose to read for entertainment? Youngsters may refuse to read because they are afraid of failure (Fox, 1989). "If a student continues to fail in reading, the student will want to avoid the task,..." (Linksman, 1995, p. 50). Nearly one half of the students at the targeted sites responded that they viewed themselves as poor readers. When children continually face failure in reading, their feelings of

confidence, and any motivation to read, dwindle. They begin to believe that reading is a task they cannot accomplish, and any desire to participate in this experience disappears. Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan stated (as cited in Guthrie, et al., 1997) that when competence beliefs and expectations for success decrease, students' intrinsic motivation and engagement in literary activities also decrease. It is the child who is less successful who loses his motivation for reading due to his eroding sense of competence (Guthrie, et al., 1997). Along with their eroding sense of confidence, there may also be a lack of reading at home.

Lack of Reading at Home

The simple task of parents reading aloud to their children at home can vastly improve a child's level of literacy as well as enhance the child's enthusiasm for reading. Unfortunately, by the second grade, fewer parents read with their children (Calkins, 1997). Trelease (1985) discusses how television viewing in the home adversely affects reading for entertainment. "At home, television combines with the parents' general disinterest in books to smother the beginning reader's desire to read the book he brought home from school or from the library" (Trelease, 1985, p. 25). He goes on to report on the findings of a Gallup Poll taken in the 1970's. "... 82 percent of the elementary-grade children polled had not read a book in the preceding month, although they had each averaged more than one hundred hours of television during the same period" (Trelease, 1985, p. 25). This problem became evident when reading logs and reading surveys were completed. Barbara Bush stated that the joy of reading should be part of everyone's life, and the family is the place it all begins

(Morrow, 1995). Without reading in the home, a child's motivation to read may be affected. Children also may not be motivated to read because books are not accessible.

Lack of Access to Books

It is true that reading begins at home. However, not all children learn the value and enjoyment of reading from their parents. Some research suggests that a lack of access to books is one reason children do not have the necessary exposure to reading at an early age. As a result of the student survey, it was determined that 11.3% of the survey respondents lacked accessibility to books at home. Whether the reason be economic difficulties, ignorance, or apathy on the part of their parents, some children are not being provided with the print-rich environment necessary to promote reading as a desired activity (Morrow, 1995).

School should be a place where children have access to an abundance of books and other reading materials. "The classroom is stocked with a rich array of print of all kinds, including poetry, newspapers, and trade books, as well as content area books and magazines" (Zemelman & Daniels & Hyde, 1993, p. 26). Unfortunately, not all teachers see the importance of a well-stocked library, or they are unable to provide one. Ramos and Krashen (1998) point out the problem of school libraries being in poor condition and lacking choices for students. Morrow (1995) states: "Access to books is a key factor in motivating children to read" (p. 152). Therefore, without the opportunity for choice of reading materials in school, students are less likely to show an interest in reading.

Community businesses, organizations, and citizens do not

always provide the necessary programs and/or monetary support to allow for the improvement of reading motivation. "Innovative literacy programs that create connections across schools, homes, and communities reflect the value of literacy in society..." (Morrow, 1995, p. 145). However, reading often takes a back seat to other activities offered to children by the community.

Too Many Extra-Curricular Choices

"If there is a literacy crisis in this country, it doesn't revolve around whether children can read, but rather they choose to read" (Calkins, 1997, p. 33). Beers (1996) supports this concern when he states, "...those who like to read, consider themselves readers, but can't make the time to read right now" (p. 30). Further, findings from student surveys as well as teacher observations from the sites (Appendixes A and B) illustrate this point.

The struggle of getting children to choose reading over other possibilities is a concern both in the classrooms and homes.

> A U.S. Department of Education longitudinal study of almost 25,000 eighth graders found that students watched television an average of 21.1 hours a week, but spent a mere 1.9 hours a week, outside school but including homework, reading. And when literate fifth graders were monitored to determine how they spent their free time, 90 percent devoted less than one percent of their time to reading; In contrast, they spent 33 percent of their free time watching television. (Calkins, 1997, p. 33)

"Teachers cannot control distractions from reading outside their classrooms (television, Nintendo, movies)...." (Arthur & Burch, 1993, p. 280). Roe (1997) alludes to the fact that other

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

alternatives, such as Nintendo, organized athletics, and playing with peers, compete with reading. Part of the problem for lack of reading motivation is the availability of so many extra-curricular choices. However, some children choose not to read because it is laborious for them.

Difficulty with Reading

Another possible cause for the lack of voluntary reading is poor reading competence. A link between motivation and reading ability is evident in the results of the reading inventories administered to students at the three sites. In terms of ability, 23.3% of students felt they were poor readers. In comparison, 23.5% also lacked motivation. From this data, a connection between lack of ability and desire to read can be made. When the results of the reading inventories were compared to teachers' observations and student surveys, it was apparent that those with lower reading inventory scores were also those who did not engage in Self-Selected Reading (SSR), did not choose to read in their free time, and had difficulty locating books in the school and classroom libraries.

Research has focused on the decline of voluntary reading. It indicates that because time spent reading is tied to reading and writing competence (Greaney, 1987), many students who do not read in their free time often lose academic ground even if they are not initially remedial readers (Anderson, Wilson, & Fiedling, 1988; Mikulecky, 1990; Stanovich, 1986). Kropp (1996) found that the reluctant reader has some difficulty with reading, that he finds the attempt embarrassing or frustrating enough that the reading lacks enjoyment. Kropp (1996) also indicates that both the reluctant reader and the bored reader are likely to turn away from

books and fail to keep pace with their classmates.

According to members of the commission on reading, motivation is the key to learning to read (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985). This report states that poor readers have unfavorable attitudes toward reading. It is unsure whether lack of proficiency in reading stems from unfavorable attitudes or whether it is the other way around. Several common threads leading to motivating students to read for enjoyment were revealed in the literature and thus, Chapter 3 discusses the solutions developed in this project.

CHAPTER 3

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Improving levels of reading for enjoyment is a concern both in and outside of the classroom. Several solutions are presented in current professional literature. Primarily, these solutions center around making reading a priority by setting aside time to read, modeling reading, increasing access to books, and motivating reading through social interaction. Researchers discuss the importance of making connections between literature and life. Calkins (1997) discovered that the love of reading and the ability to lose oneself in another world are gifts we give our children. Nothing matters more than helping our children create lives in which reading matters.

Trelease (1985) suggests that children need to be taught to want to read as well as how to read. According to Trelease (1985):

> There is the key: desire. It is the prime mover, the magic ingredient. There is no success story written today whether in the arts, business, education, athletics in which desire does not play the leading role. Somehow we lost sight of the reading precept: What you make a child love and desire is more important than what you make him learn. (p. 8)

Making Reading a Priority by Setting Aside Time To Read

Some children always have a book in their hand and their enthusiasm for reading lasts a lifetime. Other children, who are equally capable readers, need a spark to ignite their interest in books. Treu (1995) states, "We truly never know what will make our students avid readers. We do know some ways to lure them into the reading community. The bait we use is good books, good talk, and good practice" (p. 37). A special time should be set aside every day to read, both in the classroom as well as in the home. The researchers of this paper suggest the use of reading logs as one way to document the amount of time students spend reading at home. Each night the children should record the amount of time read and the title of their selection. The parents should sign the reading log at the end of two weeks and return it to the teacher for confirmation. "When children are shown how to make time for enjoying and using books, they will not only consider reading a pleasurable option and an essential part of their daily lives but they will learn to make time to read" (Mooney, 1990, p. 23).

Grimes (1991) noted the importance of setting aside time to read. Reading each day for about fifteen minutes increases motivation (Linksman, 1995). This amount of time should be allocated each day for students to read silently in the classroom. According to Grimes (1991), the first step is giving students time to actually discover what reading can really do for them. Cramer and Castle (1990) concur that if students simply read more, their skills and reading strategies would improve. Furthermore, Anderson (1985) encouraged educators to increase the amount of time students spend in individualized reading.

According to Mooney (1990) one way classroom teachers can allow time for individual reading experiences is through a proven technique called self-selected reading. During self-selected reading, students spend fifteen minutes a day reading silently in the classroom. The teacher should also read silently to effectively model this activity.

Another component to self-selected reading is that students select their own reading material. Many subscribe to Krashen's (1993) and Atwell's (1987) belief that students should be allowed to read anything that interests them in order to develop a habit and an enjoyment of reading. The books that children find most interesting are those they have selected for their own reasons and purposes (Gambrell, 1996). Palmer et al. (1994), reiterates that self-selection of reading material is clearly linked to enjoyment and sustained reading experiences. SSR shows students that reading is a worthwhile activity.

Students should be encouraged to select their own books but learn and use strategies for appropriate book selection. Cramer & Castle (1990) stated that the five finger rule can allow students to make better choices for their reading enjoyment. When using this rule, children should be taught to select a book, read a page, and hold up a finger for any unknown word. If four fingers and a thumb are raised, the student will know that this selection is too hard. The same procedure should continue until an appropriate selection is located. Students who can make their own selection of literature not only enjoy the reading activity, but make outstanding gains in comprehension and reading vocabulary (Fox, 1989). Modeling is also a tool in encouraging reading.

Modeling Reading

Students benefit from having role models that show enjoyment in reading. This is an area that has been explored by many researchers. "Modeling is powerful but subtle. Teachers should seize every opportunity to show students the fun and value of reading" (Arthur & Burch, 1993, p. 280). In addition to self-selected reading, modeling can occur if teachers read aloud to their class. At least fifteen minutes should be set aside each day to share books with the group. Students should sit together in a comfortable area while the teacher is reading. This can also be done in the upper elementary grades if literature of high quality and interest, such as a Newbery Award Winner, is used.

Lipton (1992) suggests that reading aloud can stir the imagination and introduce students to the different genres. Furthermore, reading aloud offers great opportunities for teachers to informally teach strategies such as interpreting and responding to literature while providing a quality model for students. For example, a class response journal can be kept after each day's read aloud. This activity could lead to individual reading response journals. During a read aloud session, teachers can also take advantage of teaching reading strategies such as rereading for clarity and using picture clues to decode unknown words. Specifically, the teacher could instruct the students to preview the pictures so that associations can be made. Gambrell (1996) goes on to state, "...in this way, we demonstrate to our students that reading helps us learn more about the world in which we live, gives us pleasure and enjoyment, develops our vocabulary..." (p. 21).

Volunteers should be invited to read during the fifteen

minute block set aside for oral reading. The guest readers should read and discuss their favorite children's books to the class. Questions about the reading selection should be prepared and asked of the audience. School staff, parents and older students are among those who can share the reading experience. Activities such as these demonstrate to children how reading enhances life (Gambrell, 1996). These encounters are experiences that can be important to a child's intellectual growth. Students begin to see the value others put on reading and develop the desire to read themselves.

Trelease (1985) suggests that if parents read to children while they are still young enough, they will want to imitate what they are seeing and hearing. Children are more likely to develop a habit of reading if it is modeled at home. Wasik (as cited by O'Connor, 1999) said, "The most important thing that we can do with our kids is provide them a lot of opportunities to read and be read to" (p. 4). She added, "I would hope that parents start reading to their children when they're babies" (O'Connor, 1999, pp. 66-67). A routine should be created in the household that allows a special time each day for reading. Reading logs, as mentioned previously, can document time spent reading at home. This practice can help establish positive life-long reading habits. In 1994, Rasinski stated there is a strong relationship between the degree of parental involvement and children's success in reading. Children who are read to regularly at home show a significant gain in reading. In addition, according to Trelease (1985), reading aloud is such a multi-faceted experience that adults often benefit from it as much as the children. One of the many benefits is spending quality time

sharing enjoyable literature together. Having more access to books allows children to become more active readers.

Increasing Access to Books

A child's exposure to reading begins in the home. It is up to parents to guide their children in the discovery of books and provide them with appropriate reading materials and activities that promote literacy. Research has proven that children are more interested in reading when they have greater access to books. Parents that value reading and support their children by providing a print rich environment can help produce active, motivated readers (Morrow, 1995). Acquiring books for the home and making use of local libraries are two ways parents can encourage their children to take an active interest in reading. Teachers can offer opportunities for students to buy reading materials through publishing companies such as Troll, Scholastic, and Carnival that sell directly to students. This enables parents to select inexpensive books for their children to read and keep at home.

Morrow (1995) also indicates that success in school begins in the home, but once children are in school, teachers must do everything they can to help them achieve at the highest level possible. The school library should be available as a source for book selection (Scholl, 1987). If it is not possible for students to visit the library throughout the day, a 30 minute block of time should be scheduled at least once a week for book selection. If a school library does not exist, the classroom library must serve the students.

Each classroom should house its own library. Ideally, a section of the room should serve as a reading corner as well as a library. Classroom libraries should be open at all times, giving

the students a chance to explore the reading materials. The books should be arranged so they are easily accessible to students. On the shelves, the books should be arranged by themes, authors, genres, and/or topics. Related reading activities should be placed in this area for students to use when they complete a book. Students should be allowed to borrow books from the classroom library to read at home (Castle, 1994).

Students' willingness and desire to read is crucial to their development. Providing an extensive collection of reading materials that vary in topics and difficulty is essential in order to create and maintain students' interest. Ramos and Krashen (1998) showed in their research that children in classrooms with libraries do more independent reading at home and at school than do children who are in classrooms without libraries. Morrow (1995) goes on to state that "The results of the two investigations...suggest that even a modest increase in the number of books in the classroom (approximately two per child) can result in increased reading motivation and engagement" (p. 153).

Ideally, parents and teachers should work together to promote reading interest. In a program called "Running Start", allowing students to take home books borrowed from the classroom library was met with great success (Morrow, 1995). The community businesses provided funds for the purchase of books. The books were offered as rewards for reading. Gambrell (as cited in Morrow, 1995) states that:

> It is indeed noteworthy that parents in the program spent more time reading with their children and discussing books with them...An interesting finding...was that parents that participated...purchased more books for their children...

> even though the children...were bringing home a considerable number of books from school each day. (p. 152)

Community involvement also plays a role in reading promotion. Morrow (1995) tells of businesses, organizations, and corporations which support numerous reading incentive programs at different levels. Extrinsic rewards are frequently offered. "The success of RUNNING START suggests that if we want to develop intrinsic motivation to read we would be well advised to develop programs that offer books as an incentive" (Morrow, 1995, p. 153). On this subject, Gambrell (as cited in Morrow, 1995) expresses that:

> Creating motivated and engaged readers for the 21st century is a worthy and challenging goal for society. It is clear that the responsibility for meeting this goal must be shared among teachers, parents, children, and the community. If we are to make a real difference in the literacy lives of young children we need programs that will support the enrichment of classroom and home libraries. (p. 153)

Although these types of programs may be beneficial, the requirements to set them up and implement them may be too time consuming for teachers to organize. It can also be difficult to motivate local businesses to provide necessary support. Increasing access to books is important for improving reading motivation, as is allowing students the opportunity to respond to others about books they have read.

Social Interactions

Interacting with others, both formally and informally, fosters an increase in frequency of and interest in reading (Nash, 1995). Talking about literature provides the perfect arena

for pupils to respond individually regardless of their reading ability. Also according to Nash (1995), students change their literary behavior when they are engaged in book talks, visit the library, and are given opportunities to talk about books.

The possibility to connect with literature for the sheer enjoyment of reading and the excitement of trying new authors is what draws teachers to book talks (Lapp et al., 1995). Allowing a student to explain the personal impact a book had, retell part of a story, or simply share a book defines a book talk. When the teacher provides a sign up sheet for interested children, book talks then become scheduled in their classroom routine. It has been observed by the researchers that children frequently comment that they choose a book because someone, be it a teacher, librarian, friend, or parent, told them about it. Most children like to read books they know something about. Gambrell's (1996) research revealed that the more books children are exposed to and know about, the more books they are likely to read.

In addition to book talks, another strategy which encourages youngsters to interact with literature is reader's theater. During this activity small groups of students write dialogue from their literature selection, rehearse it, and read it to the class. When this activity is used in the classroom, students work cooperatively to retell a story. Routman (1991) suggests that reader's theater increases the student's level of involvement with literature. Participation in reader's theater is also supported by Galda and West (1995). They concur that when children experience literature through drama, they understand the literary elements. In addition to understanding literature, drama involves children in talking and thinking about their literature

selections.

A mentor reading program can also benefit social interaction (Baghban, 1995). This program works effectively when older and younger students are paired to read to and with each other for 15 to 20 minutes on a regular basis. First, individuals practice the five-finger rule when selecting their reading material. Then, the students are taught by the teacher how to discuss the book together by rehearsing types of questions to ask. Some suggested questions include: What do you think this story will be about and why? What is your favorite part? Do you think you would like to read more books by this author? Activities such as illustrating a favorite book part, creating a new book cover, or designing a character puppet are just a few follow-up suggestions of what paired children can do when concluding their reading. It was reported by Teale (as cited in Cramer & Castle, 1990) that attitudes toward school and learning increase positively for all children in cross-age interaction. Baghban (1995) believes that older students become positive role models and develop relationships with younger readers. Furthermore, younger and older children may derive enjoyment from this interaction.

Research indicates that there is a decline in reading for enjoyment. Therefore, this project's focus is to implement reading activities that will motivate students to choose to read. These activities are suggested best practices for motivating students to engage in reading. Within this context, teachers will implement the important strategies of making reading a priority by setting aside time to read, modeling reading, increasing access to books, and allowing for social interactions about books. Teacher

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

selected activities will revolve around quality literature. This action plan was chosen for the project in question because it combined important aspects from the preceding solutions for increasing reading motivation.

Project Objective and Processes

As a result of the reading motivational program, during September, 1999 through December, 1999, the targeted first, second, and third grade classes will increase their interest in reading for enjoyment. This will be measured by teacher observations, student surveys, and reading inventories.

In order to accomplish the objective described above, the following processes are necessary:

1. Develop and implement tools for gathering information about the students' level of motivation to read.
2. Create a classroom environment that promotes reading for enjoyment.
3. Model behavior and expectations for reading activities.
4. Implement activities that will foster enjoyment for reading.

Action Plan

I. Data collection (September, 1999)

- A. Student Survey
  1. Distribute to all students.
  2. Collect surveys and record results.
  3. Compile data.
- B. Reading Inventory
  1. Administer Inventory individually to all students.

2. Record results.
3. Compile data.

C. Observation Checklist
1. Observe each student in reading workshop, silent reading time, library time, and free time in class.
2. Complete the student observation checklist.
3. Analyze the data.
4. Begin anecdotal records on students.

II. Making reading a priority by setting aside time to read.
A. Self-Selected Reading (begin September, 1999)
B. Five-Finger Rule (begin September, 1999)
C. Reading Logs (begin September, 1999)

III. Modeling (begin September, 1999)
A. Reading aloud at school, fifteen minutes per day.
B. Guest readers monthly for fifteen minutes.
C. Home reading fifteen minutes, four days a week.

IV. Increasing access to books (begin, September, 1999)
A. Provide access to school library
B. Utilize the classroom library
C. Book purchase program

V. Social Interactions (begin, October, 1999)
A. Book Talks (weekly)
B. Reader's Theater (monthly)
C. Reading Mentor Program (bimonthly)

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the interventions, student surveys, teacher observations, and reading inventories will be used. The surveys and reading inventories will be distributed and

administered to students in early September, 1999 and again in December, 1999. The teacher observation sheet will be completed in October, 1999 and again in December, 1999. The goal of these assessments is to determine motivation and attitudes toward reading prior to and at the conclusion of the study. Additionally, informal anecdotal records will be kept and analyzed.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The purpose of this project was to increase all children's interest in reading for enjoyment. Working in the classroom and in cooperation with the home, a variety of techniques to motivate children's reading were implemented.

During the first month of school, the student survey was administered. This survey was given to the students at sites A, B, and C. Each teacher received written directions and a script to read aloud to the students. The data was then compiled and analyzed. Later in September, each teacher at the three sites filled out a teacher observation checklist (Appendix B). The students were observed during reading workshop, silent reading, library time, and free time. Specific behaviors were the focus of these observations. The researchers looked at individual students to see if they chose books at their appropriate reading level, appeared to enjoy reading, and if they could answer questions about their book. Silent reading observations included choosing appropriate reading material and sustaining reading for a designated amount of time. Using time for reading and making purposeful choices were the target for observations during library time. The researchers also observed students during free time periods. These observations were to gather information on choices children made related to reading. Both the survey and the teacher

observations were used to gather information to show problem evidence and gather information about individual students.

Following the student survey and teacher observation checklist, anecdotal records were kept at each site in order to monitor students' progress throughout the research period. Observations were made during reading workshop, silent reading time, library time, and free time. These observations were an extension of the teacher checklist. Written observations were made in the fall and again in the winter. These observations were used to note any changes before and after the interventions.

The interventions used to motivate the children in reading were focused on classroom use and home involvement. The interventions were executed at all three sites. The researchers met weekly to discuss progress, share anecdotal records, and assure that interventions were being administered consistently. The implementation of the following were selected to affect the desired change: reading logs, self-selected reading, a daily read aloud time with both the teacher and occasional guest readers, a specially designed classroom library, weekly book talks, reader's theater, and a cross-age reading mentor program.

Making reading a priority by setting aside time to read was the first intervention. Focus was placed on reading at home as well as in the classroom. From the beginning of this project, the connection between school and home was paramount.

In early September, the students were introduced to the home reading program. Reading logs were used to document the amount of time students spent reading at home each day (Appendix C). The students were asked to read a minimum of 15 minutes, four days per week. The parents were informed in September at an informational

meeting to encourage participation in this extension program (Appendix D). This emphasized an important connection between school and parents. The logs were signed by parents and returned to the teacher at the end of each two week period.

Self-selected reading was also introduced to the students early in September. Fifteen minutes were set aside each day for silent reading. Prior to this activity, the students were given instruction on how to choose appropriate books for their reading level. In order to help them make appropriate choices, the five finger rule was demonstrated repeatedly until it could be applied independently. The researchers documented successful application of the five finger rule on the anecdotal records. In addition to recording implementation of the five finger rule, it was also noted whether or not students were engaged in reading.

Modeling opportunities were used throughout the day in each classroom. Beginning in September, each teacher spent approximately 15 minutes reading aloud to the class. This continued daily throughout the research period. Furthermore, the school librarian read weekly to the classes. A variety of stories were used to informally teach reading strategies as explained in Chapter 3. Once a month, guest readers were invited in to share their favorite books with the classes. Parents, staff, and community members were solicited the first week of school through an invitational letter. Next, each site designed a schedule so that there would be a guest reader on a monthly basis. Teachers and the school librarian provided assistance in the selection of books to read.

To help increase the students' access to books, it was suggested that they utilize the public library. A local public

librarian visited all sites to discuss the many available services and distributed library card applications to those youngsters who did not possess one. Additionally, 30-35 minutes a week were spent visiting the school library. The school librarian read aloud various books and presented book talks to each class.

Each classroom organized its own library. The school librarian helped the classroom teachers organize their libraries. During the month of September, reading materials were arranged by title, genres, and topics. Books and magazines of all levels were made available. The library was equipped with carpeting, bright lighting, and attractive displays. The books were shelved both open faced and with the spines showing. Additionally, theme books were added to the collection to enrich classroom instruction. These materials were housed in accessible bins to be read during self-selected reading time.

Inexpensive book purchases were made available to each student through monthly book clubs. Scholastic, Troll, and Carnival were utilized for this purpose. Prior to giving the students the order form, teachers highlighted the selections offered and encouraged their purchase. Additionally, the researchers purchased a book for each student as a gift. These book clubs also provided inexpensive or free books for the teachers to add to their classroom libraries.

To foster more frequent reading, several opportunities were given for social interaction. Book talks were one occasion for such an experience. Each week, the book talk participant chose a book and shared information about the author, illustrator, characters, and the story plot. The participants included the classroom teacher, the school librarian, or student volunteers.

These individuals discussed a book with the whole class. The librarian visited the classroom with books related to each site's curriculum. The teacher presented an adequate number of book talks to the students to model this procedure. Then, students who were interested, signed up for a time to share a book they recently read and enjoyed.

Monthly, small groups of students wrote dialogue from the books they were reading and presented it to the class in what is called reader's theater. The amount of time spent modeling this activity varied at each site depending on the needs of each individual classroom. To model this intervention, the teacher chose the book, Three Billy Goats Gruff. The book was read aloud to the children. After reading the book, the teachers demonstrated how to write dialogue with the written text. Each teacher continued this procedure until the students were able to do this on their own. After the students completed the same book from the reading curriculum, groups of no more than five students were placed together. These groups were then instructed to choose a section of the book, write it in dialogue form, rehearse it, and then perform it to the class.

A cross-age reading mentor program was implemented in early October. The intent of the program was to meet regularly and to provide the experience of sharing books with one another as well as building a relationship centered around books. This bimonthly program randomly matched younger students with older students. Together, they read and discussed a book. These books were suggested by the teachers and school librarian and usually had a connected theme. Participants were provided with a week of training from the teacher prior to the start of this program.

After the data was collected from the project, the results were analyzed and will be presented in the following section.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of motivational techniques used with the students in the research groups, a student survey, anecdotal records, and a reading inventory were administered and analyzed.

Student Surveys

The student survey was administered to all three research sites in early September and again in December. This survey gave the pupils an opportunity to share their feelings about reading. The researchers used the information gleaned from this survey to gather data about reading motivation. Figures 1 - 6 show the averaged results at all three sites. The graphs enable the reader to see substantial gains made during the research period.

The first question asked on the survey was: Do you like reading books? Figure 1 exhibits that by December, 18.4% more students liked reading books.

Question two asked the students: Are you good at reading? In September, 54.7% agreed, whereas in December, 66% felt they were capable readers. Gains were made in this area as shown in Figure 2.

Next, Figure 3 represents data collected from the survey question Do you read at home for fun? The September response to this question was 52% concurring that they did. In December, 66% of the pupils read at home for fun, which indicates a 14% increase.

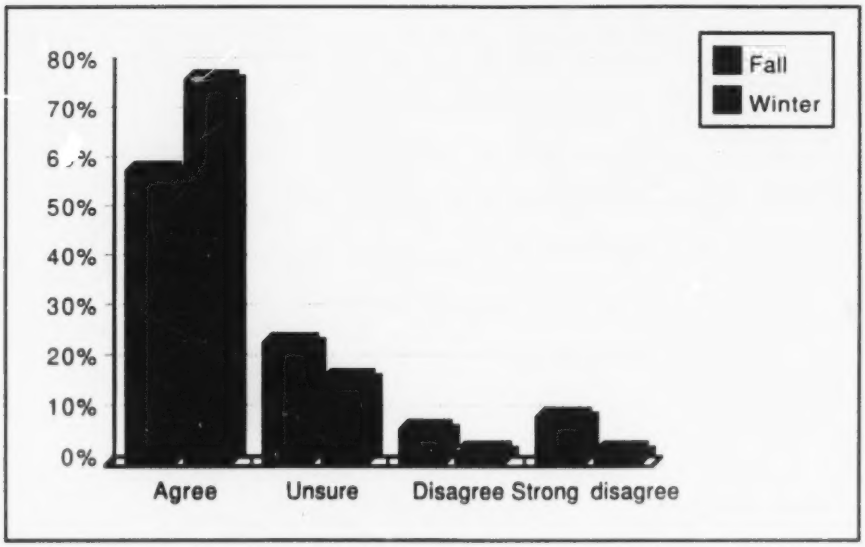


Figure 1. Do you like reading books?

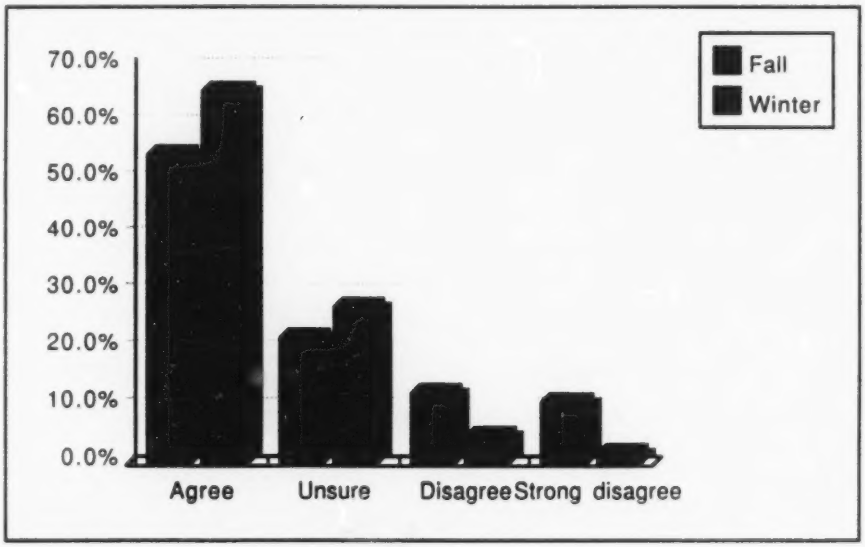


Figure 2. Are you good at reading?

When it came to receiving books as gifts there was also an increase. As displayed in Figure 4, by December, 68.9% stated they enjoyed receiving books as a present. This 17.1% increase was unexpected from the 51.8% September response.

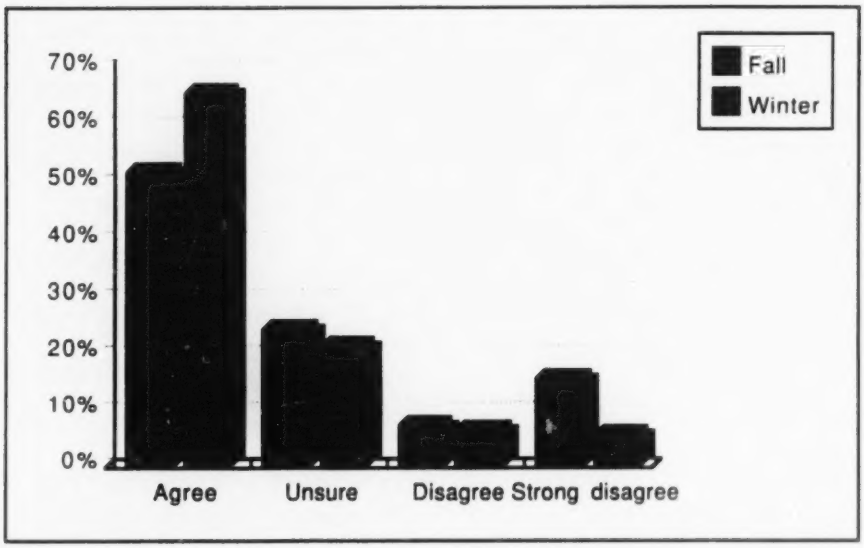


Figure 3. Do you read at home for fun?

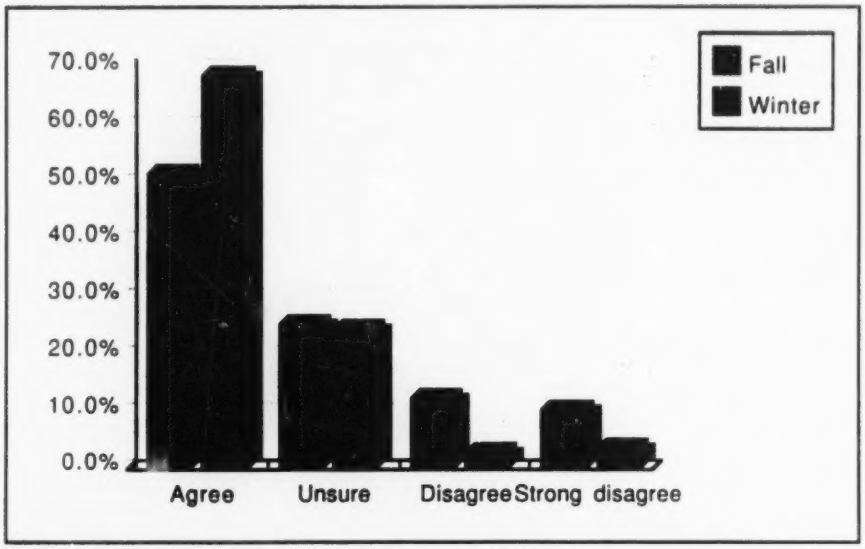


Figure 4. Do you like to receive books for a present?

Figure 5 shows that in September and December, the majority of students had books at home to read. There was a 7.5% climb. The last part of the survey asked children to circle two activities they do during their free time. There was a 20.6% increase in the number of pupils who chose to read in their free

time, as indicated in Figure 6. Anecdotal records were also used to document students' reading habits.

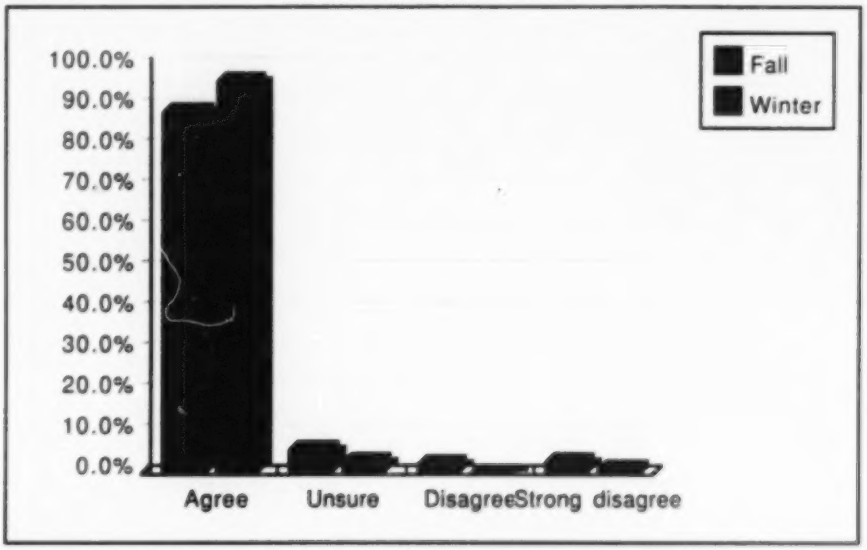


Figure 5. Do you have books at home you can read?

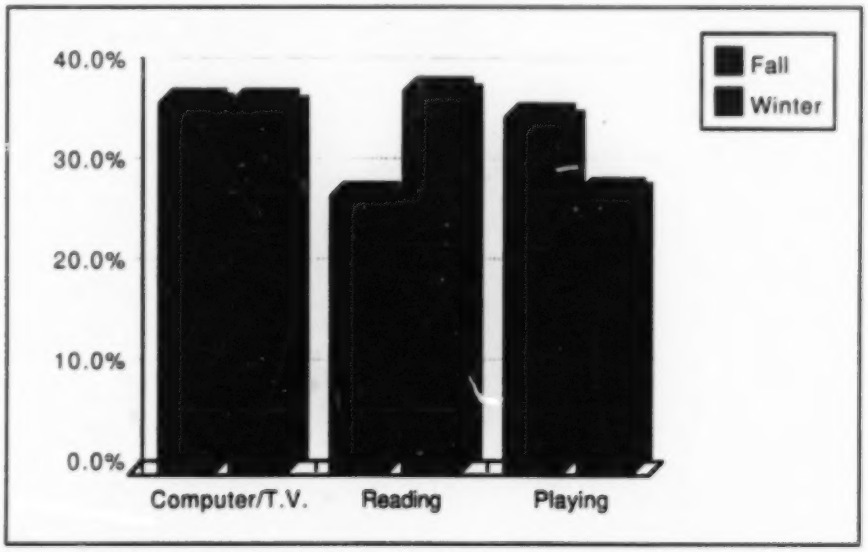


Figure 6. Circle 2 things you do during your free time?

Anecdotal Records

The teachers from all three sites recorded observations about the students' reading behaviors. Site A noted that the most

obvious change was observed in the selection of books during self-selected reading time and library check out. The researchers observed that students were excited about visiting the library and throughout the course of the research period, this interest climbed. Students were observed checking out and returning books more frequently.

At Site B, the most notable observation was student purchases from the various book clubs. The researcher noticed that when the books were highlighted and recommended, the students wanted to purchase them for their own. Each month the number of books purchased increased.

Modeling how to appropriately select books had an impact on the students' selections. The students were often observed using the five finger rule to select books for self-selected reading, reading workshop, and the reading mentor program. Its use was particularly noted when one student taught this strategy to their reading partner. In the classroom library, students appeared to enjoy reading the varied selections that were made available. Over the course of the research period, records from the classroom library check out list showed an increase in the amount of students borrowing books for home use.

The Site C researcher observed an increase in reading for enjoyment from September to December. Site C noted an increase in the amount of time students were able to read silently over the course of the research period. The students were able to select appropriate reading materials both in self-selected reading and reading workshop. In November, there was an increase in the number of books checked out from the classroom and school library. Additionally, the type of student interaction during book

discussions and reader's theater elevated. The teacher modeled book talks at six different times and presented five lessons on reader's theater before the students were able to do both independently.

The students exhibited excitement when the reading mentor program was introduced and it ascended throughout the program. Many students commented that they looked forward to participating in this activity. The students were able to continually choose an appropriate book to read with their partner. They were also able to lead and participate in meaningful follow up discussions. Many students opted to rehearse books so that they could comfortably share them. This researcher stated that all of the interventions will be continued throughout the year. Reading inventories were an additional method of assessment used to document problem evidence.

Reading Inventories

The last method of assessment was the administration of the reading inventory. This inventory determined the reading level of the students by assessing their vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension level, and oral fluency. The researchers' use for this device was merely to determine the appropriate independent reading level of their subjects. When the reading inventories were compared to the student surveys, it was discovered that of the 45.3% of students who were not confident of their reading levels (Figure 2), nearly half of those scored below grade level on the fall reading inventory. When the reading inventories were administered again in the winter, there was an increase in both the confidence of the students, as seen in Figure 2, as well reading inventory scores. Administering this in September gave

the teachers more confidence in guiding students to self-select more appropriate reading materials throughout the research period. All the sites agreed that the interventions boosted their students' motivation for reading. Thus, the following are conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentations and analysis of the data on the student surveys and observations, the targeted sites showed an increase in reading motivation since September. The five finger rule was one successful reading intervention. This strategy enabled the students to independently select books at their reading level with minimal frustration. There were many noted experiences of children effectively using this rule when they selected books for the different interventions.

Due to the construction of an organized and well stocked classroom library, children were motivated to select books and sustain silent reading during SSR time. Organizing the libraries in this way was highly successful. It was also noted on several occasions that children were choosing to read books from the classroom and school library during their free time.

Having the connection between the school librarian and classroom teacher also successfully stimulated reading for enjoyment. Children were able to see the value of reading when it was modeled through book talks, guest readers, and reading aloud by the school librarian, in addition to the classroom teacher and other adults. Relying on the expertise of the school librarian had a positive impact on the interventions. The school librarian was instrumental in helping classroom teachers and guest readers choose appropriate books for reading aloud.

The reading mentor program provided for interaction of two age groups with both benefiting. The time on task and interaction of the groups were evident by the students being self-directed to complete the activities with minimal teacher involvement. Another opportunity for children to interact with books was reader's theater. This activity elicited enjoyment of reading because the children were able to act out their favorite selections.

The book purchase program was a definite attraction. By using this program, parents had an active role in helping their children acquire books for at home reading. In this manner, the teachers were also able to get books that were of interest to their students. Providing students with the opportunities to purchase their own books and borrow books from school and classroom libraries may be the cause for the increase in motivation to read.

The researchers agree that all the interventions should be implemented into the classroom. However, some interventions take more preparation than others due to age levels. These activities include reader's theater and book talks. The key to success for these and all interventions is effective modeling. Teachers should not implement them until they are at their comfort level. Doing so could adversely affect the intended outcome.

Classroom teachers need to spend ample time selecting books for modeling reading with the support of their school librarian. Helping guest readers choose enjoyable books will engage the students in the guest reader experience. Therefore, training for guest readers is recommended. The school librarian would be a perfect resource for devising a guide for selecting, discussing and reading aloud to children. It is also our recommendation that

students be encouraged to take on the role as guest readers.

The classroom library requires a great deal of preparation prior to its use. The students can help organize and label the books in the classroom library at the beginning of the school year. This eliminates some work for the teacher but enables the students to have earlier access to the books. The students will also take more pride in the library and help maintain its appearance. Book shelves and bins are inexpensive ways to house the books in this area. Parent donations can also be elicited at the beginning of the school year for additional books and library furniture. The classroom library must be in a well lit area in the classroom. Comfortable seating is highly recommended to encourage its use during free time. Related reading activities can also be featured in this area.

The reading mentor program can be successful if all students are trained in their roles. Keeping the same reading partner throughout the program is a positive influence when the partners are working cooperatively. If problems become evident, a change in partners may be warranted for the success of this experience. Rules and guidelines need to be clearly established and maintained throughout the program. It is recommended that reading partners be at least one grade level apart. Times and days should be consistent on a weekly basis.

An effective technique for getting students to purchase books from the book clubs is to have teachers review the selections with their students prior to sending them home. It is also recommended that a parent letter accompany the book order form with information about the month's selections and the order form due date.

Reading logs are a successful means of getting students to read at home. This program works best when the logs are packaged and presented at the first parent meeting early in the school year. Recommended book lists should also be included in this packet along with public library information, school library rules, and classroom library procedures. Also at this time, parents should be taught the five finger rule so that they can guide their children in the selection of materials. All interventions should be explained to the parents to help them gain an understanding and to support the development of literacy.

The goal of this research project was to increase all children's interest in reading for enjoyment. Specific interventions both at school and home were implemented in order to achieve this goal. This particular plan appeared to have a positive impact on the targeted sites at a local level. A lack of reading for enjoyment has generated concern amongst educational researchers. This plan could be implemented by all classroom teachers and school librarians to achieve an increase in reading motivation. Although there are many ways to improve motivation to read, the suggested interventions with consistent practice worked well in first, second, and third grades. However, further research would be necessary in order to know if these interventions would be successful with older students. Reading is a life long skill and, if modeled consistently at home and at school, children can learn to value the experience.

References

Anderson, R. C., Hiebert, E. H., Scott, J. A., & Wilkinson, I. A. (1985). Becoming a nation of readers : The report of the commission on reading Washington, D. C.: National Institute of Education.

Anderson, R., Wilson, P., & Fielding, L., (1988). Growth in reading and how children spend their time outside of school. Reading Research Quarterly, 23, 285-303.

Arthur, B. M. & Burch, Angela (1993). Motivation for reading is an affective concern. Intervention in School and Clinic, 28 (5), 280-287.

Atwell, N. (1987). In the middle: Writing reading and learning with adolescents. Portsmouth, NH : Heinemann.

Baghban, M. (1995). Siblings can help with reading. The Reading Teacher, 12 (17).

Beers, G. Kylene, Ph.D. (1996). No time, no interest, no way! School Library Journal,42 (2), 30-33.

Calkins, Lucy (1997). Motivating readers. Instructor,106 (5), 32-33.

Calkins, Lucy. (1997) Raising lifelong learners. Reading, MA : Perseus.

Castle, Marrietta. (1994). Promoting the disabled reader's self-esteem. Reading and Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties, 10 (2), 159-170.

Cramer, E. & Castle, M. (1990). Fostering the love in reading : The affective domain in reading education. Newark : Delaware.

Ford, M. E. (1992). Motivating humans. Newbury Park, CA : Sage.

Fox, Barbara J. Ph.D.(1989). Rx for reading. New York : Penguin.

Galda, L. & West, J. (1995). Exploring literature through drama. In N. Roser & M. Martinez (Eds.). Book talk and beyond: Children and teachers respond to literature (pp.183-190). Newark, DE. International Reading Association.

Gambrell, Linda B. (1996). Creating classroom cultures that foster reading motivation. The Reading Teacher, 50 (1), 14 - 23.

Gambrell, L. B., Almasi, J. F., Xie, Q., & Heland V. J. (1995). Helping first graders get a running start in reading. In L. M. Morrow (Ed.). Family literacy: Connections in schools and communities (pp. 143 - 154). New Brunswick, NJ.: International reading Association, Inc.

Gambrell, L. B., Palmer, B. M., Codling, R. M., & Mazzoni; S. A. (1996). Assessing Motivation to Read. The Reading Teacher, 49 (7), 518 - 533.

Greaney, V. & Hegarty, M. (1987). Correlates of leisure-time reading. Journal of Research in Reading, 10 (3), 3 - 20.

Grimes, Marijo (1991). Finding hooks to catch reluctant readers. English Journal, 80 (1), 45.

Guthrie, J. T. (1996). Educational contexts for engagement in literacy. The Reading Teacher, 49 (7), 432 - 445.

Guthrie, J.T., Alao, S., & Rinehart, J.M.(1997). Engagement in Reading for Young Adolescents. Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 40 (6), 438-446.

Henk, W. & Melnick, S. A. (1995). The reader self-perception scale (RSPS) : A new tool for measuring how children feel about themselves as readers. The Reading Teacher, 48, 470 - 482.

Krashen, S. (1993). Power of reading. Engelwood, CO : Libraries Unlimited.

Kropp, Paul (1996). Raising a reader : Making your child a reader for life. New York : Doubleday.

Lapp, D., Flood, J., Kibildis, C., Jones, M.A., & Moore, J.(1995). Teacher Book Clubs: Making multicultural connections. In N. Roser, & M. Martinez (Eds.) Book talk and beyond: Children and teachers respond to literature (pp.42-49). Newark, DE.

Linksman, Ricki (1995). Solving your child's reading problems. Naperville, IL : National Diagnostics Institute.

Lipton, L. (1992) Meaning is the method : whole language in the thoughtful classroom. In A. Costa, J. Bellanca, & R. Fogarty (Eds.) If minds matter : A forward to the future, Vol. 2.

Mikulecky, L. J. (1990). Stopping summer learning loss among at-risk youth. Journal of Reading, 33, 516-521.

Mooney, M. E. (1990). Reading to, with, and by children. New York : Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc.

Morrow, L. M. (Ed.). (1995) Family literacy: Connections in schools and communities. New Brunswick, NJ.: International Reading Association, Inc.

Nash, M. F.(1995). Leading from behind: dialogue response journals. In Book talk and beyond: Children and teachers respond to literature (pp.217-225). Newark, DE.:International Reading Association.

O'Connor, Anne (1999). Reading for life. Better Homes and Gardens, February.

Palmer, B. M., Codling, R. M., & Gambrell, L. B. (1994). In their own words: What elementary students have to say about motivation to read. The Reading Teacher, 48, 176-178.

Ramos, Francisco & Krashen, Stephen (1998). The impact of one trip to the public library: making books available may be the best incentive for reading. The Reading Teacher, 51 (7), 614.

Rasinski, T. (1994). Making parental involvement work. Reading Today, 11. 31.

Routman, R. (1991). Invitations. Toronto.

Robb, Laura (1998). Helping reluctant readers discover books. Booklinks, March.

Roe, Mary F. (1997). Combining enablement and engagement to assist students who do not read and write well. Middle School Journal, 28 (3), 35-41.

Scholl, Kathleen (1987). A strategy for helping reluctant readers discover the helpful librarian. The Reading Teacher, 41 (3), 324-325.

Stanovich, K. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. Reading Research Quarterly, 21, 360-406.

Trelease, Jim (1985). The Read - Aloud handbook. New York: Penguin.

Treu, Carol Evans (1995). Luring Readers Out of Hiding. Voices from the Middle,2 (2), 29-40.

Wigfield, A. (1994). Expectancy - value theory of achievement motivation : a developmental perspective. Educational Psychology Review, 6 (1), 48 - 78.

Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., & Hyde, A. (1993). Best practices: New standards for teaching and learning in America's schools. Portsmouth, NH : Heinemann.

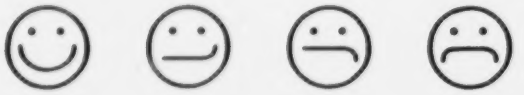
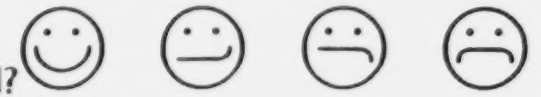
APPENDIX A

STUDENT READING SURVEY

My name is _____ The date is _____ I am in _____ grade

Student Reading Survey

Color the face that shows your answer for each question.

1. Do you like reading books?
2. Are you good at reading?
3. Do you read at home for fun?
4. Do you like to receive books for a present? 
5. Do you have books at home that you can read? 

APPENDIX B

TEACHER OBSERVATION SHEET

Teacher Observation Sheet	Child's Name	
	School	Grade
	Teacher	Age
Date	Fall	Winter
READING WORKSHOP		
Chooses books at		
appropriate reading level		
Appears to enjoy reading		
Answers questions about		
the book		
Book Title		
SILENT READING TIME		
Chooses appropriate reading		
material		
Can sustain reading for the		
length of designated time		

APPENDIX C

HOME READING LOG

Name _____
Sent home on _____
Return to school on _____

59

Home Reading Record

*Goal: To enjoy reading at least 15 minutes, four days per week at home.

Keep track of your time on the calendar.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
___ minutes	___ minutes	___ minutes	___ minutes	___ minutes	___ minutes	___ minutes

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
___ minutes	___ minutes	___ minutes	___ minutes	___ minutes	___ minutes	___ minutes

Write the titles of the books you have read at home in the box below.

Books I Have Read

* *Use the back of the sheet to write more titles, if necessary!*

Child's Signature: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

65

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX D

PARENT INFORMATION LETTER

September 1999

Dear Parents,

We'd like to take this opportunity to explain our Home Reading Program.

We know that with your busy schedule, it is often difficult to find time to read with your child. However, encouraging your child to be a reader may be one of the most important gifts you can give - and one of the strongest links between home and school. There is a tremendous reward for your efforts: children who are involved in home reading programs show dramatic improvements in their reading ability and attitude.

Your role in our Home Reading Program is vital. We suggest that you set a minimum goal of reading at least fifteen minutes per day, four days per week. Reading can be parent to child, child to parent, shared reading, or any combination of the above. Please help your child keep track of his/her reading by completing a Reading Log for two week periods throughout the school year. A schedule of the program is provided on the reverse side of this letter for your reference.

SOME HELPFUL TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL BOOK SHARING INCLUDE:

- Choose books you and your child really enjoy.
- Books should be at a comfortable reading level when your child reads to you.
- You may want to read to your child and/or take turns reading to one another.
- Encourage your child to use a book's pictures and familiar words as clues.
- Occasionally ask, "What do you think will happen next?"
- Invite your child to retell stories you've read.
- Always praise your child for his/her effort.

By sharing your enjoyment of books you will be establishing an enduring love of literature for your child.

Thank you for your support!
Hawthorn Primary Teachers

Please sign and return by September 17th.

Declaration of Commitment

We support the Home Reading Program and will take time to read and to record our reading. We will also be responsible for returning the Reading Log record sheet every two weeks.

_____
Parents

_____
Date

_____
Child

67